

impressed by his erudition in Marxist literature. Moreover, his excursions into the realm of history and philosophy seemed to me naïve and even ridiculous. I liked him for his revolutionary temperament, strong will, and resourcefulness. I knew, however, that, while he kept me in his inner circle, he did not trust my loyalty to his faction.

In 1907 an S-D convention—Bolsheviks and Mensheviks together—was to meet abroad. I do not remember precisely the rules for electing delegates, but the principle was that each faction would have one delegate for each hundred votes cast for its candidates in the local party cells. Although I did not campaign personally, I had more votes than all the other Bolshevik candidates in the St. Petersburg organization together, partly because of the votes of the unemployed. My votes, added to those cast for other Bolshevik candidates, would have given the faction five additional seats in the convention. But in the Bolshevik conference that made the final arrangements, Lenin barred my election, declaring that it would be better for the faction to lose all five places than to have Sergei Petrov sit in the convention. The Committee gave me the choice of going to the convention as head of an independent group or transferring my votes to the faction's list of candidates. I chose the latter.

The next time I saw Lenin he said to me, "You may wonder why we did not confirm your election. I objected to your presence at the convention. I knew you would vote with the Mensheviks if you liked their position better than ours. Worst of all, many delegates to the convention will be on the fence, and if you walked out, they would walk out with you. Was I right?"

"You were," I replied. "I would not accept any mandate with a factional string attached to it. Moreover, I would not have left the unemployed for the party convention."

Lenin was satisfied for the time being with my conditional allegiance to the group. This episode brought us closer together. I had no political ambition, was only moderately interested in party affairs, and did not feel humiliated by Lenin's opposition to me. Rather, I was flattered by his recognition of my independence. After all, he was the boss and wanted to have his group at the convention marching as a troop at the parade, executing his orders. I was not suited to such a performance.

Perhaps I was then under the spell of Lenin's personal charm, but it was neither his nor any other political doctrine that held me in the revolutionary movement. Torn between my scientific interests and everyday drudgery among the unemployed, I asked myself why I could not go back to my books. The urge that I had had in the heyday of the revolution to be with the people had faded away. There was no longer any revolution or any "people" to join. But I